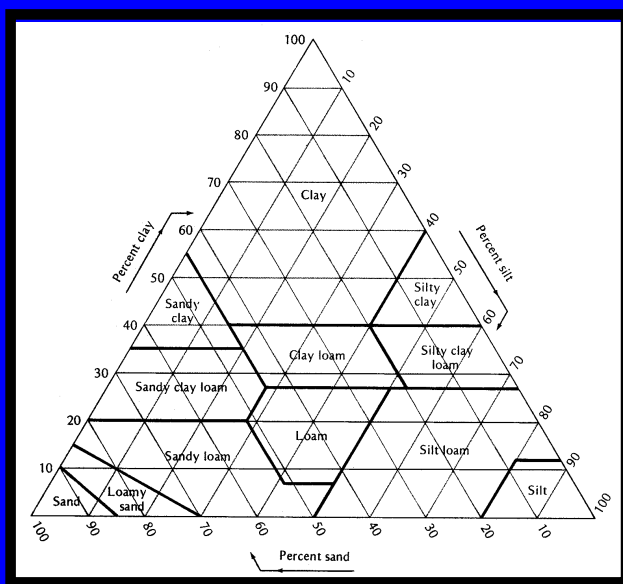


# On-site Wastewater Designer Licensing and Inspector Certification Program



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## **On-site Wastewater Designer Licensing and Inspector Certification Program Summary of RCW 18.210**

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The On-site Wastewater Designer Licensing and Inspector Certification Program (DLIC) allows the limited practice of engineering by establishing a statewide licensing program for designers of on-site wastewater treatment systems. This program will create uniform application of individual qualifications, minimum competency, performance standards, continuing education, and consistent enforcement efforts.

In addition, this program provides for the certification of persons who inspect or approve on-site wastewater treatment systems on behalf of a local health jurisdiction.

The Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors will administer both the licensing of designers and the certification of inspectors, assisted by an Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is composed of individuals with broad knowledge and experience in the design, construction, and regulation of on-site wastewater treatment systems.

The Board shall have the authority to conduct investigations of violations of the statutes and/or rules adopted by the Board, to reprimand, fine, suspend or revoke the license of any designer found guilty of misconduct.

## **Licensing and Certification**

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### **Practice Permits**

- Until June 30, 2000, Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJ's) will continue to administer their on-site programs, including authorizing individuals to design on-site systems and also enforcing state and local standards and regulations. On July 1, 2000, the authority to license designers will transfer to the state.
- Applications for Designer's Practice Permits will be accepted starting April 1, 2000, with permits being issued beginning July 1, 2000 to those persons who are authorized by the LHJ to prepare on-site wastewater treatment systems in those jurisdictions.
- Anyone practicing or offering to practice the design of on-site wastewater treatment systems between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001, must hold a Designer's Practice Permit. Individuals holding practice permits may only practice (design on-site systems) in the LHJ where they had authorization to practice as of July 1, 2000.
- Designer's Practice Permits will need to be renewed annually until June 30, 2003, at which time they will expire. After June 30, 2003, all persons who practice or offer to practice the design of on-site wastewater treatment systems must hold a state Designer's License.
- A Designer's Practice Permit is not required of those individuals who are employees of a LHJ and are eligible to obtain an Inspector's Certificate of Competency.

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## **Designer Licenses**

- Applications for the Designer's License will be accepted by the Board beginning in January 2001. The first licenses will be issued effective July 1, 2001.
- Designer Licenses will be issued after demonstration of required education and experience, passing a written exam, and paying the required fees.
- This Designer's License will enable the license holder to perform design services for on-site wastewater treatment systems in all counties of the state, without additional qualifications.
- Licensed Designers will be required to obtain an inking stamp, as authorized by the Board that contains the licensee's name and license number. All plans, specifications, and reports prepared by the licensee must be signed, dated, and stamped.

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## **Eligibility Requirements for Designer's License**

- High school diploma or equivalent, and
- A minimum of four years of experience, as approved by the Board, showing increased responsibility for the design of on-site wastewater treatment systems. The experience must be verified and include, but not be limited to, site soil assessment, hydraulics, topographic delineations, use of specialized treatment processes and devices, microbiology, and construction practices.

Two of the required four years of experience may be satisfied by completion of two years of college-level course work in subjects dealing with, but not limited to, soils, hydraulics, topographic delineations, construction practices, and/or microbiology or completion of a two-year curriculum in on-site treatment systems technology, and applications, as approved by the Board.

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## **Inspector Certification of Competency**

- Applications for the Certificate of Competency will be accepted by the Board beginning January 2001. The first Certificates will be issued effective July 1, 2001 to eligible individuals that pass the written exam administered for licensure.
- A Certificate of Competency holder is not allowed to practice as a licensed designer. However, local health jurisdictions are allowed to perform on-site design services under their authority in chapter 70.05 RCW.

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## **Eligibility Requirements for Certificate of Competency**

- Must be an employee of a LHJ
- The employee must obtain a passing score on the written Designer's examination,
- Local Health Director or designee must make a written request on behalf of the employee, and
- Payment of fees (to be established by the Director of Licensing.)

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## **Persons exempt from Licensure**

- Licensed Professional Engineers, as provided in chapter 18.43 RCW,
- Employees or subordinates of licensed Designers or licensed Professional Engineers, provided they are working under the direct supervision of a licensed Designer or licensed Professional Engineer.

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## **Penalty for Unlicensed Practice**

On or after July 1, 2003, it is a gross misdemeanor for any person, who does not hold a Designer's License or is not otherwise exempt, to:

- perform on-site wastewater treatment systems design services,
- offer to design on-site wastewater systems,
- attempt to use the license or seal of another license holder,
- attempt to use a revoked or suspended license,
- attempt to use false or fraudulent credentials.

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## **Continuing Education**

Licensed Designers and holders of Certificates of Competency will be required to obtain continuing professional development or continuing education, which will be

determined by the Board. There may also be a requirement to demonstrate maintenance of knowledge and skills as a condition of license or certificate renewal, which may include peer review of work products and periodic reexamination.

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## **Financial Assurance and Accountability**

In July 1999, the Director of Licensing convened a work group to study the financial assurance and accountability of on-site wastewater system practitioners through bonding, insurance, risk pools, or similar methods.

The work group's recommendations, *Report to the Director: On-site Designer Licensing/Inspector Certification Financial Assurance Work Group*, was submitted to the director on December 1, 1999

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## **Program Evaluation**

By July 1, 2005, the Department of Licensing and Department of Health will convene a review committee to evaluate the licensing and certification programs established under this chapter.



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## **Dates to Keep in Mind**

### **April 1, 2000**

The Board will begin accepting applications for Designer Practice Permits.

### **July 1, 2000**

Issuance of Designer Practice Permits begins. All programs administered by local health districts that authorize the practice of on-site wastewater treatment systems end.

### **January 2001**

Beginning in January, the Board will accept applications for the Designer's License and the Inspector's Certificate of Competency.

### **April 2001**

First administration of the Designer Licensing /Inspector Certificate of Competency exam.

### **July 1, 2001**

Designer Licenses and Certificates of Competency issued to applicants who passed examination.

### **July 1, 2003**

As of this date, unless otherwise exempt, anyone who designs or offers to design on-site wastewater treatment systems must have a Designer's License issued by the Department of Licensing.

## Questions and Answers

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*The following questions are included here to add additional clarification on the features of this program and its planned implementation.*

### **1. Who is affected by this new law?**

*Those persons who design or are interested in designing on-site wastewater treatment systems, and/or persons employed by Local Health Jurisdictions to inspect or approve those same systems.*

### **2. Which state government agency will oversee this new On-Site Wastewater Treatment System Designer Licensing/Certificate of Competency program?**

*The State of Washington, Department of Licensing and Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.*

### **3. What standards of practice will apply to the work performed by designers and inspectors?**

*The standards of practice will be uniformly applied to all those persons who design or inspect on-site wastewater systems. The implementation of the program includes the creation and appointment of an Advisory Committee. This committee, which will be comprised of industry and local government representation, will be charged to develop the practice standards that will eventually be considered for adoption by the Board.*

**4. If I obtain a Designer's Practice Permit, will I be able to design on-site systems anywhere in the state of Washington?**

*No, a Designer's Practice Permit only entitles you to design systems in those Local Health Jurisdictions who had already authorized you to design systems as of July 1, 2000.*

**5. With a Designer's License, will I be permitted to design on-site systems anywhere in the state of Washington?**

Yes.

**6. If I want to design on-site systems between now and July 1, 2000, what must I do?**

*Contact the Local Health Jurisdiction (often a county health department) where you wish to design, follow their protocol for working in their district and obtain their authorization to design.*

**7. If I want to design on-site systems between July 1, 2000 and July 1, 2001, what must I do?**

*Obtain a Designer's Practice Permit by documenting authorization to design on-site systems in a Local Health Jurisdiction as of July 1, 2000, and make application to and pay appropriate fees to the Department of Licensing, Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.*

**8. I work in a health district jurisdiction that does not currently have a local designer licensing program. How do I qualify to obtain a Practice Permit?**

*You are considered to have LHH authorization if you are permitted to submit designs regardless of your credential or whether a licensing program exists.*

**9. If I am not authorized to design on-site systems in a local health jurisdiction on July 1, 2000, will I be able to obtain a Designer's Practice Permit at all?**

*No. Designer Practice Permits are only available to persons authorized by a LHH to design as of July 1, 2000.*

**10. What if I do not want to get a Practice Permit; can I still obtain a license?**

*Yes. Provided you make application, pay the necessary fee and pass the examination. The earliest you can obtain a license will be July 1, 2001.*

**11. Will there be a period of time during which no new designers can enter the field?**

*Yes, between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001, only those individuals who are authorized by a local health jurisdiction to design as of July 1, 2000 will be allowed to obtain a Practice Permit and design on-site systems (and only in those same jurisdictions).*

**12. When will I be able to obtain a Designer's Practice Permit?**

*Applications for the Designer's Practice Permit will be*

*accepted beginning April 1, 2000, and issued effective July 1, 2000.*

**13. When will I be able to obtain a license as a Designer?**

*Applications for a license will be accepted starting in January 2001. The first examination for a Designer's license will be administered in April of 2001. The candidates passing this examination will be issued a license effective July 1, 2001.*

**14. How and when can a person obtain a Certificate of Competency?**

*Applications for the Certificate of Competency will be accepted starting in January 2001 with the first examination being administered in April 2001. The certificates will be issued and effective July 1, 2001, the same time that the new licenses for designers are issued. The examination for the Certificate of Competency will be the same examination administered for the Designer's license.*

**15. Is it possible for a person who passes the examination to be both a licensed Designer and a Certificate of Competency holder?**

*Yes. However, the person must meet the eligibility requirements for each credential as will be established by Advisory Committee and the Board. A Certificate of Competency will only be issued to employees of a local health jurisdiction.*

**16. Describe the continuing education requirements for the Designer's License and the Certificate of Competency for inspectors.**

*Typically, continuing education requirements are imposed at*

*the time a license or certificate of competency is issued. The exact requirements will be determined by the Board based upon the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.*

## **17. How will these new programs affect the Local Health Jurisdictions?**

*Local Health Jurisdictions (LHJ's) will not need to make changes in how they regulate on-site wastewater design and installation and inspection. Those jurisdictions will continue to review plans, issue permits for construction and grant approvals in accordance with Department of Health and local health regulations.*

*However, as of July 1, 2000, the practice of local health jurisdictions authorizing certain individuals to prepare and submit designs will end. That activity will transfer to the state Department of Licensing through this program.*

## **18. Why and how is the Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors involved in this program?**

*While this is an important specialized field of practice, it is and has been viewed as existing within the scope and definition of engineering practice under chapter 18.43 RCW.*

*Because of the Board of Registration's extensive experience in the development of administrative rules, examination development, adjudicative procedures, and licensing, and with its new authority under RCW 18.210, the Board will be the adopting authority for rules, fees, and the administration of examinations and enforcement activities for the On-site Designer License/Inspector Certification Program. The Board of Registration is a long established*

*program with a sound financial basis upon which this new program can be supported for a limited time.*

*In addition, the Board will be assisted by the On-site Advisory Committee in the development of administrative rules and technical requirements. Together, the two groups will create a sound program that meets the expectations of the legislature, industry, and the public.*

**19. Where does the money come from to operate this program?**

*Under the initial bill approval, an appropriation was made for the first two years for a total amount of approximately \$275,000. That is divided into approximately \$190,000 for the first year ending June 30, 2000 and approximately \$85,000 for the year ending June 30, 2001.*

*Of the total amount for the first two years, the legislature has required that the Boards Dedicated Account contribute a one-time share of approximately \$100,000.*

**20. How is the program funded into the future?**

*All state licensing programs are required to collect sufficient revenue from fees to make the program self-supporting. That is, the program must generate enough money to pay for the services required.*

**21. What are the fees that will apply and how much will they be?**

*Fees have been determined based on the expected number of licensees and the amount of revenue necessary for the program to be self-supporting per RCW 43.24.086.*

The fee categories and corresponding fees are as follows:

<b>Title of Fee</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Practice permit application .....	\$100.00
Practice permit renewal .....	250.00
Designer license application .....	175.00
Designer license application (comity) .....	50.00
Designer license renewal .....	250.00
Designer license reexamination .....	100.00
Late renewal penalty .....	100.00
Certificate of competency (inspector):	
Application .....	175.00
Certificate of competency renewal .....	250.00
Certificate of competency reexamination .....	100.00
Late renewal penalty .....	100.00

**22. Will licensed Professional Engineers be required to take the designer's licensing exam in order to design on-site wastewater systems?**

*Licensed Professional Engineers are not required to obtain this license. They are, however, required to perform to the same technical and industry standards as licensed designers.*

**23. Will Registered Sanitarians be required to take the designer's licensing exam in order to design on-site wastewater systems?**

*Registered Sanitarians must meet the same requirements as any other designer, including passing the examination, to obtain a Designer's License.*



## **Additional Information**

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The information contained within this booklet is offered as a public courtesy and does not constitute an exhaustive explanation of this law.

Additional questions may be addressed to:

On-site Program Manager  
Board of Registration for Professional  
Engineers and Land Surveyors  
PO Box 9649  
Olympia, WA 98507-9649

If you wish to obtain a copy of the law, please write to the above address for The Board of Registration for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors, or e-mail your request to *engineers@dol.wa.gov*.

## **Notes**

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*The Department of Licensing has a policy of providing equal access to its services. If you need special accommodation, please call (360) 586-3363 or TDD (360) 586-2788.*

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